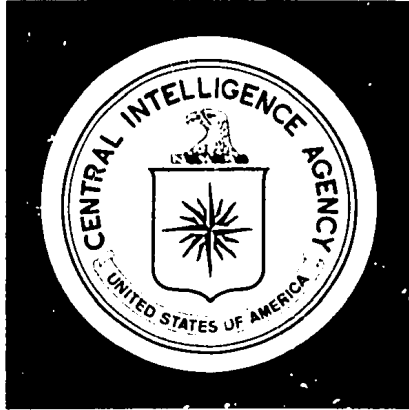


Approved For Release 25X1  
2008/11/03 :  
CIA-RDP85T00875R001000090

Dec

Approved For Release  
2008/11/03 :  
CIA-RDP85T00875R001000090  
completed

**Top Secret**



DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

*Developments in Indochina*

State Dept. review completed

**Top Secret**

25X1

25X1

125  
2 January 1973

**Page Denied**

25X1

DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA

*(Information as of 1500)*

SOUTH VIETNAM

[REDACTED] the Communists may be preparing for another military surge. Saigon forces are preparing to counter this anticipated action. President Thieu's decree on political parties is coming under increased opposition. The President is sending special emissaries abroad to widen support for his peace position.

25X1

25X1

CAMBODIA

[REDACTED] Communist forces have attacked a series of government positions south of Phnom Penh.

LAOS

The government is trying to retake Sala Phou Khoun. Both sides talked tough at the 2 January negotiations session.

2 January 1973

25X1

25X1

SOUTH VIETNAM

The Communists may be planning a new round of attacks to demonstrate continued military strength as the Paris negotiations resume. [redacted]

[redacted] orders for another military surge were issued around the last week in December. [redacted]

25X1

[redacted] the Communists hope to spur pressure from Congress on the US administration for a quick end to the fighting.

25X1

The Communists are not now in a position to mount an offensive anywhere near the magnitude of their spring 1972 campaign. [redacted]

[redacted] The Communists appear to believe that claims of their own combat readiness serve to offset the adverse effects of allied military action, such as the intensified bombing of North Vietnam. There have been a limited number of enemy military moves in the past few weeks that indicate a possible intention to increase offensive operations. Prior to any major country-wide effort, however, additional enemy troop moves would probably be observed. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

Saigon's Plans to Counter Anticipated Enemy Action

The South Vietnamese are aware that the Communists would like to increase the level of military action in the near future and are taking steps to counter such moves. The chief of the Joint General Staff (JGS), General Cao Van Vien, said in late December that the Communists are planning a major offensive against the Saigon area during January. General Vien feels, however, that the timing of the

2 January 1973

25X1

25X1

attack is more likely to be keyed to the beginning of the Tet holiday on 3 February, rather than any special US occasion such as the convening of Congress on 3 January or the 20 January inauguration of the President.

The JGS has ordered the South Vietnamese armed forces to take all possible precautions to counter and contain any Communist offensive, and military furloughs are to be limited during the Lunar New Year celebrations. The commanders of Military Regions 3 and 4 have recently realigned their forces, moving their better troops to the most threatened areas.

The South Vietnamese police have also been training and reorganizing in anticipation of increased enemy military action.

25X1

Reaction to Decree on Political Parties

Some of South Vietnam's independent and opposition political figures have begun to denounce President Thieu's decree on political parties. As expected, the An Quang Buddhists are unhappy with the measure, and Buddhist Senator Vu Van Mau hopes the National Assembly can amend it. Tran Van Tuyen, an opposition leader in the Lower House who is associated with the Vietnamese Nationalist Party (VNQDD), told

2 January 1973

-2-

25X1

25X1

[REDACTED]

the press that the decree was a "stupid action" which would force most parties to either join Thieu's Democracy Party or side with the Communists. Similarly, Revolutionary Dai Viet Party (RDVP) leader Ha Thuc Ky charged that the President was leading South Vietnam "toward a one-party dictatorship." Ky claimed that the RDVP would "act as if the law does not exist" and asserted that "we are ready to go to jail."

The administration apparently is not worried by the clamor against the decree. Senator Nguyen Van Ngai, one of Thieu's key political operatives, told US Embassy officers last weekend that he expected many outcries of protest, but that political unity is a must and the government would strictly enforce the provisions of the measure. Ngai believes that after a period of agonizing, most of the country's significant political elements will either join the Democracy Party or coalesce into one or two opposition parties. [REDACTED]

25X1

Saigon Still Looks for Support on Peace Issue

The Thieu government is launching another diplomatic and propaganda campaign designed to drum up support for its peace position. In remarks reported in the Saigon press, President Thieu defended his position at a New Year's Eve reception for the diplomatic corps. Thieu restated his objections to the proposed peace terms and blamed the Communists for blocking a settlement. In a similar vein, the Saigon press reports that the President sent a letter to Pope Paul on 1 January denouncing the Communist peace position.

Thieu is sending two emissaries on a special mission to friendly capitals in Asia, Europe, and the Western Hemisphere to seek greater support for Saigon. Three special envoys made similar trips to

2 January 1973

25X1

[REDACTED] 25X1

countries in the Far East shortly after Hanoi's late October announcement of the proposed peace terms. According to press reports, former foreign minister Tran Van Do and former ambassador to the US Bui Diem leave this week for Japan, Indonesia, and Canada. Bui Diem has informed US Embassy officers that the two will also come to Washington to explain Saigon's policies to members of Congress and other influential contacts.

[REDACTED] 25X1

[REDACTED] 25X1

2 January 1973

-4-

[REDACTED] 25X1



**Page Denied**

25X1

25X1

*The Military Situation*

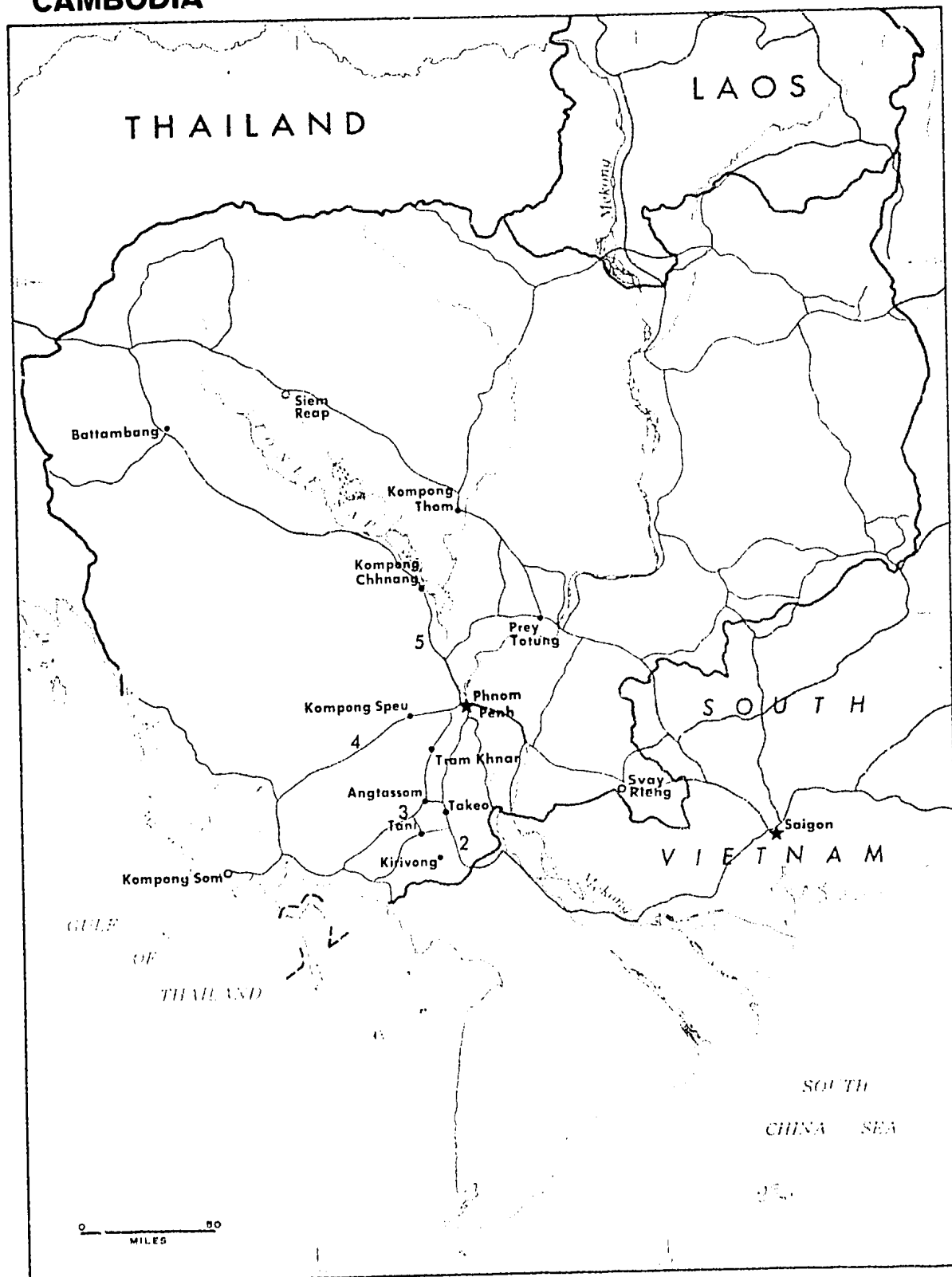
Communist forces on 1 January launched a series of attacks against several government positions along

2 January 1973

-6-

25X1

## CAMBODIA



553946 1-73

25X1

Routes 2 and 3 south of Phnom Penh. The heaviest fighting reportedly occurred at Prey Totung, some 15 miles south of the capital. According to press reports Cambodian paratroops and armored elements from Phnom Penh have now reached the embattled village. Government positions at Tram Khnar along Route 3 and at the towns of Angtassom and Takeo have also been subjected to Communist harassment, and Route 2 north of Takeo is closed again to traffic.

25X1

25X1

Farther south, South Vietnamese and Cambodian Army engineers have repaired all but two bridges and a five-mile section of Route 2 between Takeo and the South Vietnamese border. The joint South Vietnamese - Cambodian operation aimed at clearing an area west of Route 2 and at recapturing the towns of Kirivong and Tani is continuing to meet little resistance.

In the north, Kompong Thom continues to come under periodic harassment, but government forces have widened their defensive perimeter and the situation there appears to have stabilized. A total of 77 government troops have been killed at Kompong Thom since the fighting began on 7 December, and another 450 are missing.

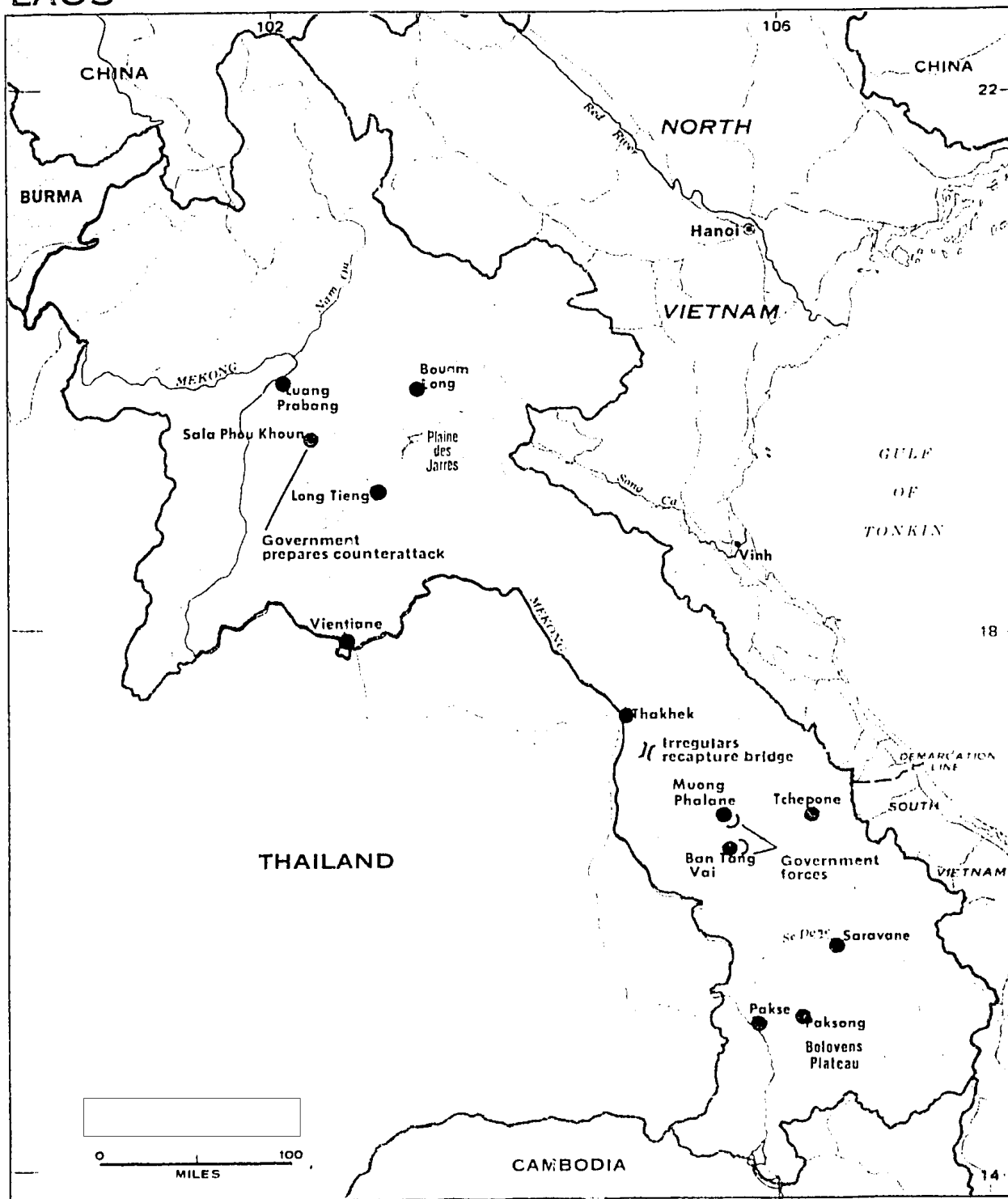
25X1

2 January 1973

-7-

25X1

# LAOS



553044 1 23 01A

● Government controlled

● Communist controlled

25X1

LAOS

The government has begun an operation to re-take the road junction at Sala Phou Khoun lost to the Communists over the weekend. Three government battalions from Luang Prabang have been airlifted to positions east and north of the junction. At the same time, government commanders south of Sala Phou Khoun are trying to regroup their dispirited troops for a counterattack.

25X1

Little Action Down South

Military activity in southern Laos has slowed in the past few days. In the central panhandle, two irregular battalions moved south from Thakhek along Route 13 and on 30 December recaptured the Se Bang-fai bridge that had been lost to a Pathet Lao - North Vietnamese force ten days ago. Elsewhere in the panhandle, irregular units that had been pursuing the North Vietnamese 29th Independent Regiment east along Route 9 have taken up defensive positions east and south of Muong Phalane.

Farther south, irregulars at Paksong report little enemy contact. North Vietnamese ground probes and shellings of Saravane are continuing

25X1

Peace Talks Still Stalled

At the 12th session of the weekly peace talks in Vientiane on 2 January, the Communists issued an exceptionally tough and uncompromising statement insisting that the US be condemned in any draft agreement and that the government respond immediately to previous Pathet Lao peace proposals. The government's statement was somewhat more moderate in tone, but it also failed to break any new ground.

25X1

2 January 1973

25X1